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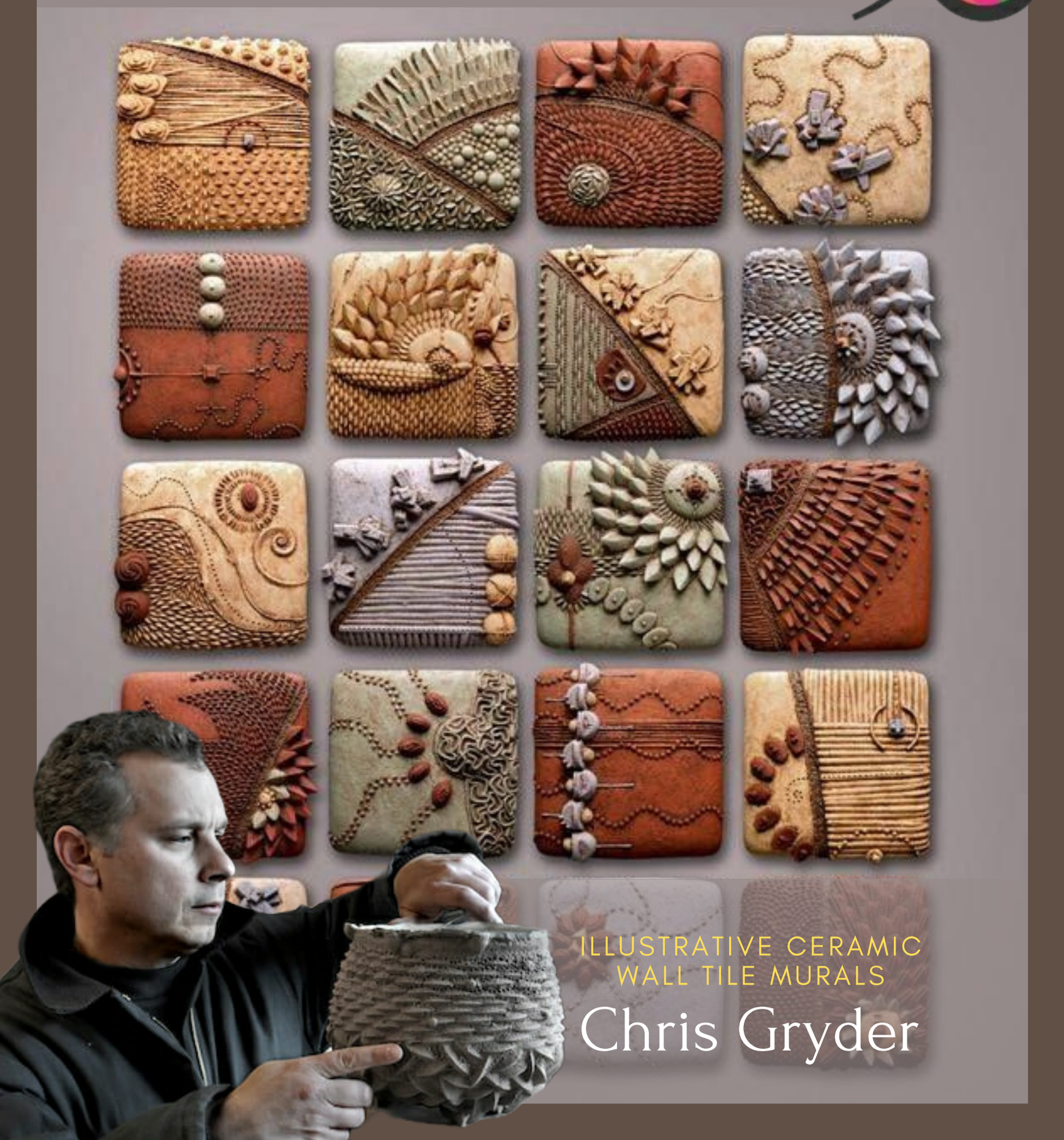
CULTURAL ONLINE MAGAZINE

INK OCHi

FIRST OF ITS KIND FROM KERALA

50th ISSUE



ILLUSTRATIVE CERAMIC WALL TILE MURALS

Chris Gryder

CULTURAL eMAGAZINE
INKOCHI
FIRST OF ITS KIND FROM KERALA

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Editor's Note

HIP HIP HOORAY! OUR 50TH ISSUE IS OUT

INKochi is celebrating its 50th issue. The magazine has grown, developed and matured, but most of all inspired everyone involved in it for 50 issues.

When I meet readers they often say what an achievement, you must be really proud: and of course I am, but it is not my achievement I am proud of. I merely had the idea – ideas are actually pretty worthless in themselves, we all have hundreds of ideas every day – they come and go often without us noticing them. It's only with a phenomenal amount of hard work, a stubborn refusal to compromise and tenacity to overcome obstacles that one in a million ideas become reality and a tiny bit of magic is born.

Over the last 50 issues I have been inspired every day by the enthusiasm and dedication of my team to conceive issue after issue. I am inspired by the writers and illustrators who have researched extensively and striven to meet our high standards, in order to present lively and informative material in an appealing way. I am also inspired by the advertisers who support the ***INKochi***.

But, most of all I am inspired by our readers who read each and every issue. Every subscriber/reader is an important part of the ***INKochi*** – so thank you all for making ***INKochi*** a success.

From all of us at ***INKochi*** we send you our warmest wishes for the coming days.

Happy Reading...!!
Varghese T. Thomas

PONDICHERRY

French Capital of India, Cafes and Baches

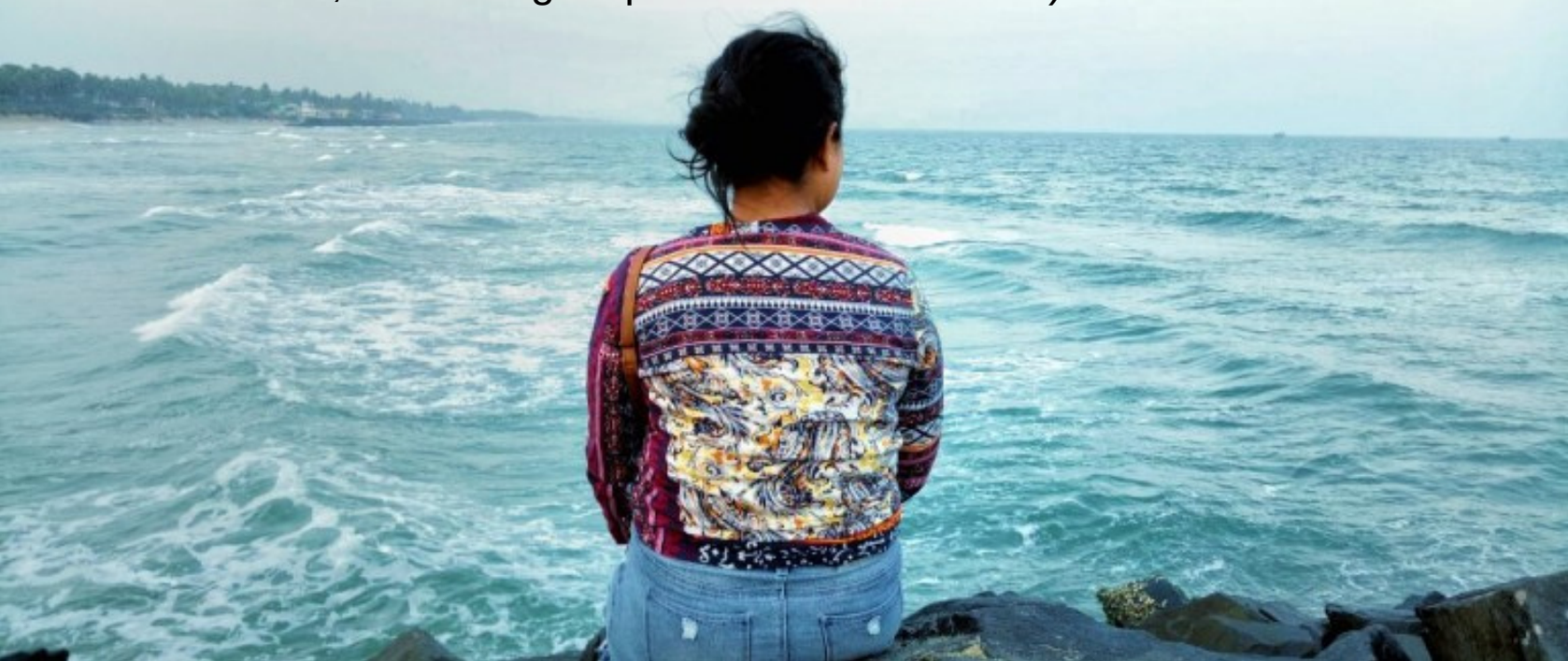
Travaloge by Upasana Kakati
PC: Upasana / Pinterest

Reminiscence of French Colony in the face of bright yellow buildings, the smell of freshly baked French Gourmet from the cafes, the gentle breeze along the pavement on Rock Beach, colourful buildings with gates adorned with bougainvillaea, the chaos of White Town, placidity embracing vibe of Auroville and tranquillity of serenity beach – Ah! Is not Pondicherry tempting you to pack right now to experience the colonial essence?

All of this is true but there runs a parallel side, a frustrating and murky one, especially for solo female travellers. Being true to travel blogging, I do not want to throw a fantastical picture when I had my moments of anguish and discomfort. I was completely flabbergasted when random local guys would stop and ask for a selfie (What? Are you kidding me?), annoyed to death with all the unwelcoming stares and lost my temper so many times. The colourful pictures of Pondicherry visit painted on the charts of travellers has a lot of dark spots, I personally experienced. >>

PONDICHERRY

However, I realised that though it was turbulent to my mind at times yet some places totally stole my heart. The calm and peace intensified to ignore the stares occasionally coming my way as I walked on the soft sand of Serenity Beach, swam through the blanket of waves in the open sea and witnessed the gorgeous sunset. (As I write this, I feel a tickle in my heart, there is something that I left behind, something so precious and beautiful). >>



How to Reach Pondicherry

Pondicherry is well connected from various places in South India like Chennai, Vellore, Bengaluru etc. There are many direct buses from Vellore and Chennai that connects to Pondicherry and takes about 4 ½ hours to cover the distance. Alternatively, you can opt for train or flight also from Bangalore or Chennai.

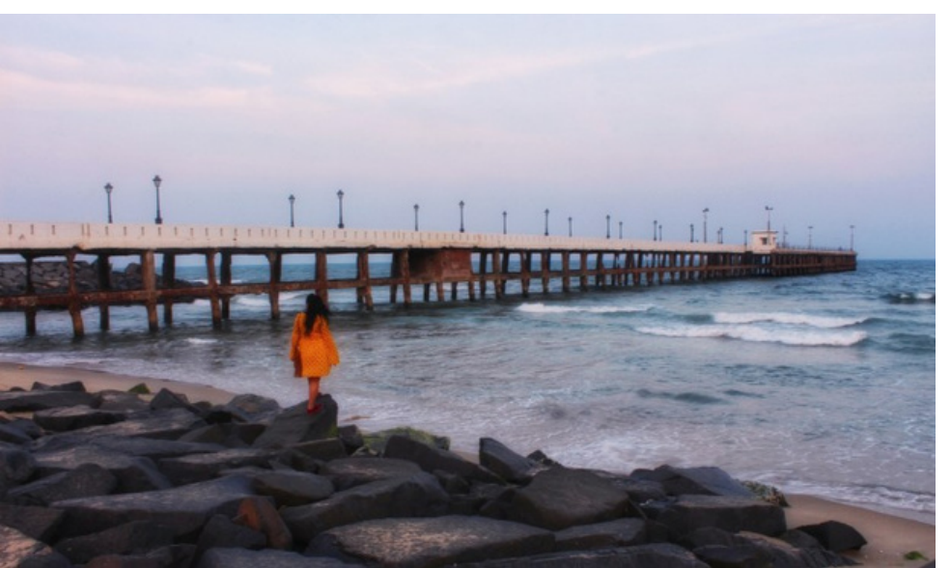
I travelled from Bangalore in the morning. There are no direct buses from Bangalore to Pondicherry in the morning. The direct sleeper buses are available only at night. I had to break the journey via Vellore. It takes around 4 hours to reach Vellore from Bangalore. From Vellore, you may opt for a general bus or AC bus. I boarded a general public bus from Vellore bus station.

PONDICHERRY

PS: Everything is written in native language and it might be difficult figuring out which bus leaves for Pondicherry. Ask the conductors or people around to guide you. >>

Places to Visit in and Around Pondicherry

The Union Territory fondly known for its colonial French reminiscence is known for its cult cafes, white sand beaches and serene outskirts. As much as I loathed the place, in the beginning, I delved deeper, spreading my arms under the open sky to slowly feel its aura.



PONDICHERRY

Rock Beach

The place, not the kind that steals my interest, is a stretch of artificially made beach area crowded and populated with a lot of tourists. It is not a place to catch my fancy until evening clumsily swims in and holds me back to feel the balmy breeze. Seemed a lot like lost and feeble cousin of Mumbai's bandstand, it is a nice place to take some shots with the glorious bridge, rocks and sea, all in one frame.

PS: The beach is in White Town, close to the former French colony. It is a hotspot for a number of cafes, souvenir shops and the famous highly Instagrammed yellow coloured buildings. >>

PONDICHERRY

Paradise Beach

This beach is around 16kms from the main city of Pondicherry and is maintained by Chunnambar Resorts. There are boats operated from 9 am from Chunnambar Boat House to Paradise Island which takes you through the gorgeous backwaters. It takes around 20 minutes to reach the place. The beach is clean with the stretch of white sand and shades placed to spend time leisurely basking under the sun.

PS:
The beach closes at 4 pm which means the last boat from the Island leaves at 4 pm. Plan accordingly. The price for the two-way ticket is around Rs 300/-

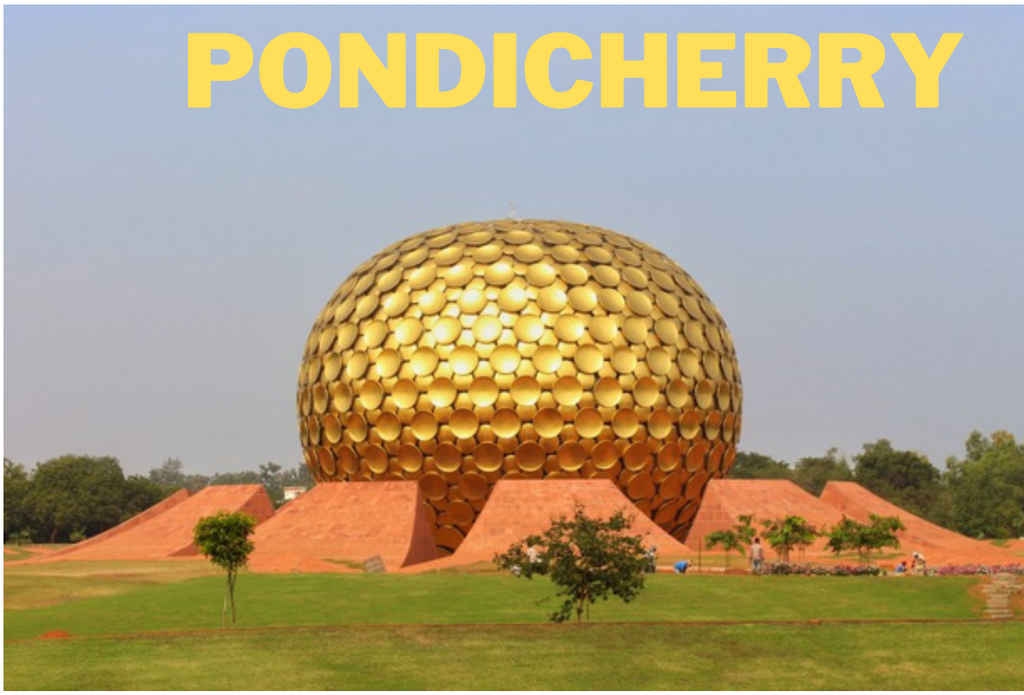
Auroville Beach

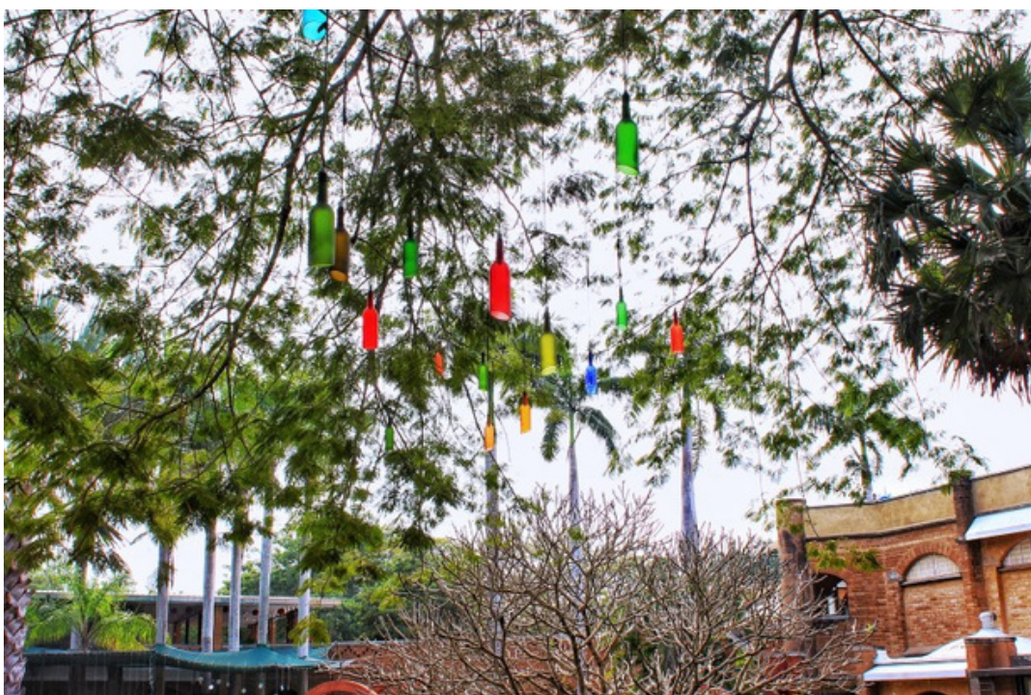
The insipid beach holds no inspiration of any sort, flocked by local people throwing unwelcoming stares. However, finding an escape is what you need, so walk along the shore and far towards the left. There comes a point with some logwoods stumbled on the sea banks and fishing boats to the other side makes a good place to make use of your camera. >>

Auroville

Frankly, it isn't a place to know in a day. To embrace the aura and soak into the beauty of the place, one needs to stay here for a while. Maybe a week or even more is needed to get into the soul of the place. The muddy unpaved roads, flowers blossoming in vivid colours, the chirping of birds, the quietness, culture and everything about the place is soul feeding. A day is definitely not enough to know the vibe of the place. It is known for Matri Mandir – The Golden Round Shaped Temple, amazing vegan cafes and an enriching culture.

PS: It is around 15 km from Pondicherry main city. It can be accessed by bus or taxi or auto service. >>





PONDICHERRY

Cafe Hopping

It is a crime to not feel and taste the essence and aroma of French food. As a connoisseur of mouth-watering food, the slightly bland cheese rich French food in the cafes is must try. Apart to from sampling the food, the quaint cafes also make satisfactory appetite to your vision with gorgeous interiors and graffiti. In and around White Town, there are many cafes to definitely jump into.

Must Try – Cafes Des Arts, Café Carte Blanche, Satsanga, Café Xtasi, Rendezvous Café, Le Club, Tanto and Le Café.

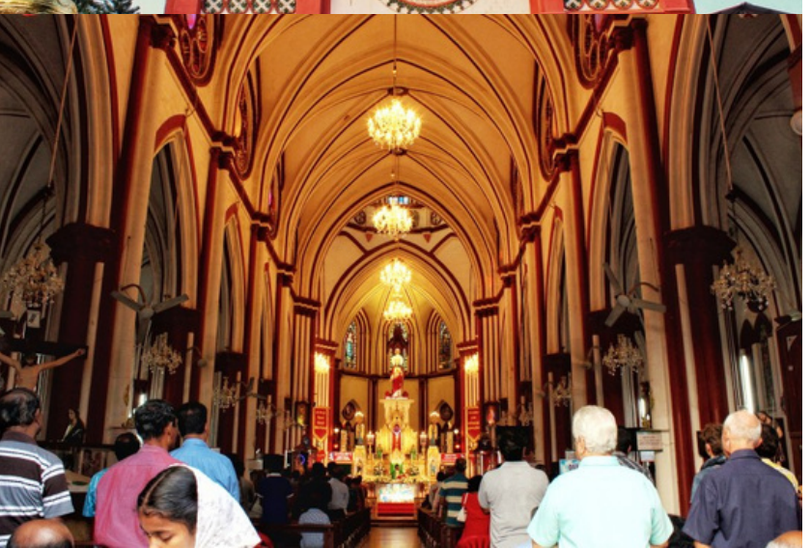
Eglise De Notre Dame Des Agnes Church (Domus Church)

The baroque church is one of the oldest churches in Pondicherry that boast of Greco-Roman architecture. The main chapel is gorgeously adorned with two pillars with exquisite work. The church strikes the right chord of beauty with its pink walls that were initially done with a mix of paint, egg and limestone. The church interiors are stunning and illuminated with opaque colourful windows with a high ride ceiling. Surrounded by a beautifully landscaped garden, it definitely is a jewel to seek some time of solitude. >>

PONDICHERRY

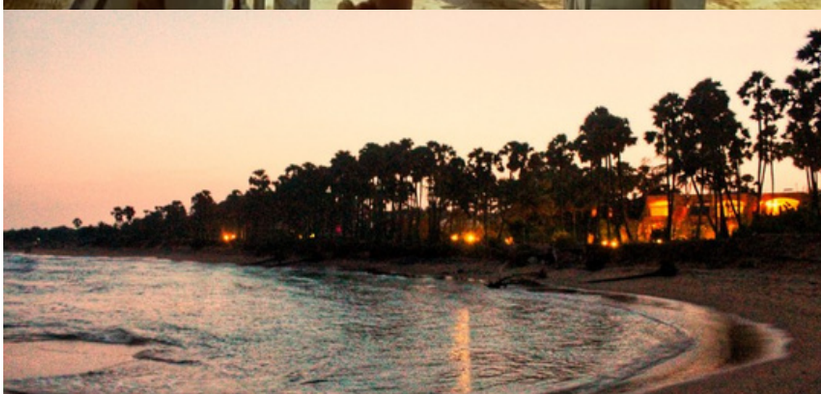
Basilica of Sacred Heart of Jesus

The cathedral is located close to the railway station and stands marvellously in the middle of the city with the excellence of its Gothic architecture. The mix of white and red walls and pillars along with the exquisite interiors of the church makes it unique. The church consists of pictures of 28 saints who were related to the devotion of Sacred Heart of Jesus. It is mostly crowded in the evenings.



Serenity Beach

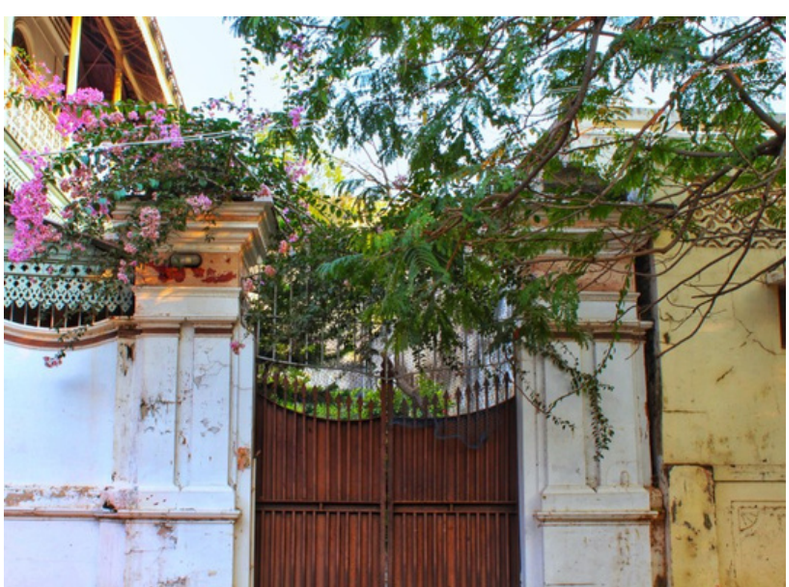
I kept the best for the last. If it wasn't for this pristine beach, Pondicherry would not be such a delightful experience. Justifying the name, the beach is located around 8kms from the main city of Pondicherry and is the perfect place to calm your senses and feel the vibe. Amidst the sleepy fishing town, the beach is haven for surfers. The waves take you in its charisma and coax you to stay a little longer. This is the best beach in Pondicherry, a must stay to enjoy the best of beach life. >>



PONDICHERRY

Important Things to Know

- Most of the places in Pondicherry are not close to each other. The best option is to hire a bike or scooty to explore the city and the beaches. If you don't know how to ride, it is best to hire a cab for a day.
- White Town and the French colony within it can be best explored on foot. However, there are rickshaw pullers who can give you a tour of the place.
- There will be a lot of unwanted stares and comments, so if you are a solo female traveller, it is best to dress accordingly especially at night.
- The accommodation can be booked by many booking portals. It is best to book an accommodation in White Town to stay close to Rock Beach & French colony.
- If you are planning to spend a night or two in the beach, I vouch for Serenity Beach without a second thought.
- If you have a day or two extra, you can take a trip to ruins of Arikamedu. The Pichavaram Mangroves are also good for a day trip.
- There are a lot of water sports activities like kayaking & canoeing at Karikal Beach, surfing at Serenity Beach and scuba diving that you can enjoy during your trip to Pondicherry. <>



ILLUSTRATIVE CERAMIC WALL TILE MURALS

Chris Gryder

Text by Dori DeCamillis

"I create sculptural ceramic objects that engage with a deep sense of time and history; a geological time and the time of civilizations. There is a visceral joy, a complete indulgence in the tactile geometric form that evokes a world where wonder still reigns. A place at the edge of the wild."

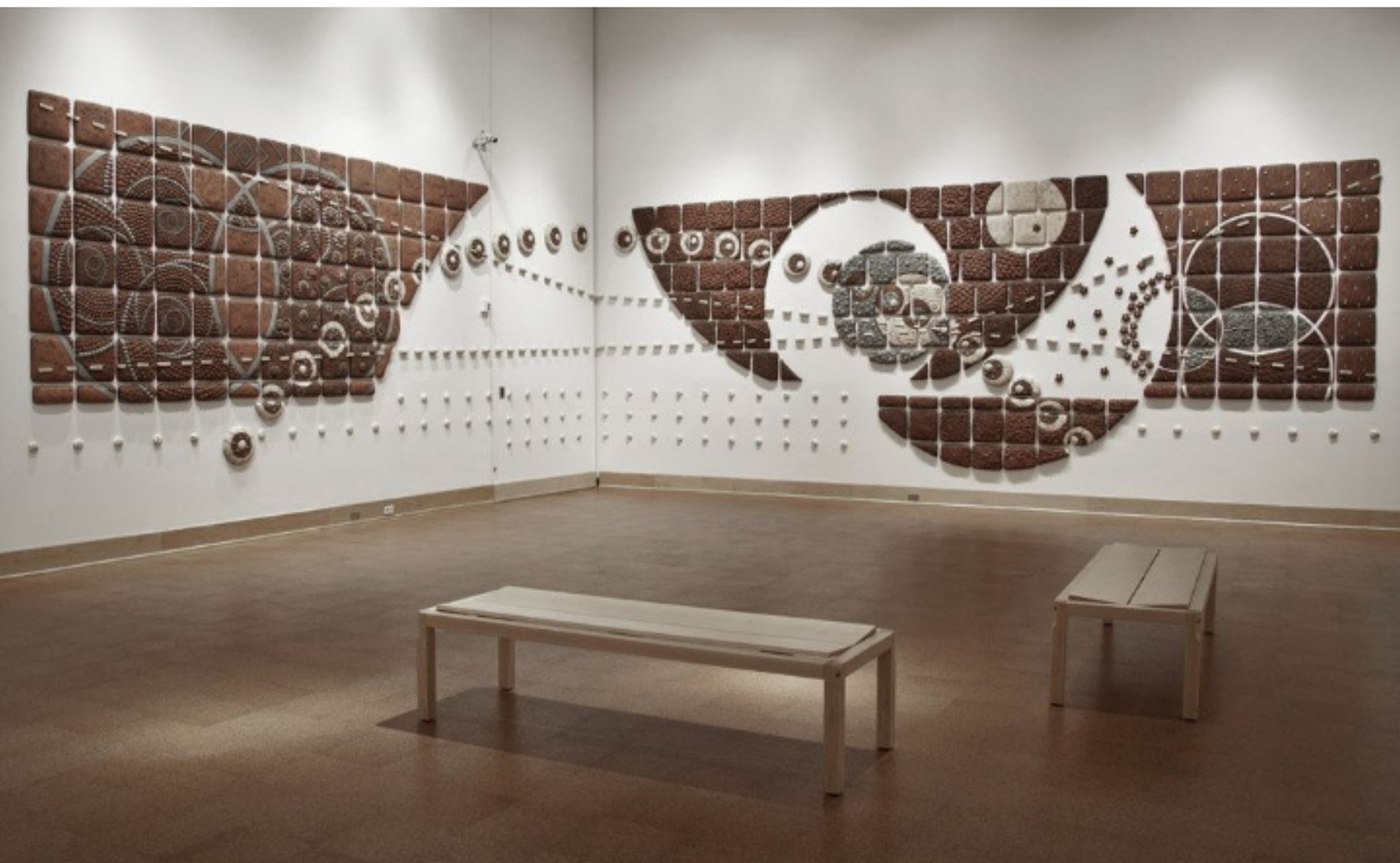
Chris' work communicates through shape and texture, making use of the timeless language of direct sensual experience. There is a primitive quality to it, echoing the pan-cultural tradition of creating decorative art that is meant simply to convey the way the maker feels about the world.

>>

ILLUSTRATIVE CERAMIC WALL TILE MURALS

Chris Gryder

This is an art of pure sensation that doesn't rest on a concept, a social statement, or any kind of idea at all. It feels vaguely archaeological without seeming to reference any time period or culture in particular. When we think of ancient civilizations, or even our own distant past, part of what colors our mental experience is the stylized art of that time, much in the same way that black and white photography molds the way we see our own more recent past. Chris' work manages to make use of that feeling without being identifiably anchored in any time or place. It's easy to see why he says his work is closely tied to time and history. >>



ILLUSTRATIVE CERAMIC WALL TILE MURALS

Chris Gryder

Chris' tiles, and especially his tile mosaics, make use of enough familiar patterns and shapes that you sometimes get the feeling you recognize what you're looking at. Yet his work never yields to any concrete interpretation. It's not a theme, an image, or an identifiable source that holds any one piece together, but rather the elegance of the geometry itself, the way one part flows into another, giving it a feeling of coherence and oneness. There's something soothing about the smooth, arcing lines that connect one panel to another, while the different patterns, shapes, and colors make each piece vibrant and stimulating to look at. Much of his work seems to blend harmony and chaos into something that feels coherent despite the paradox. >>

ILLUSTRATIVE CERAMIC WALL TILE MURALS

Chris Gryder

Just from a technical perspective, his tile mosaics are truly impressive pieces of craftsmanship. The details deserve to be admired in their own right, whether it's the smooth and geometrically tight arcs and swirling lines, or the remarkable consistency of the pebbles, scales, and other repeating shapes that he uses to create large fields of texture. It's this kind of attention to detail – and the technical prowess that it requires – that turns a promising concept into a truly exceptional work of art.

You should definitely check out Chris' website, where you can buy tile mosaics, individual tiles, and ceramic vessels. His website also includes a blog, images from his Instagram, and more information about his work and education history as well as some insight into his approach and his inspirations. He is a very talented artist whose work deserves a large audience. >>

ILLUSTRATIVE CERAMIC
WALL TILE MURALS

Chris Gryder

Chris's path has consistently gravitated towards and found redemption in "making," whether in Architecture School at Tulane where his attraction for physical form was explored in the sanctioned realm of cardboard models, or in the sun drenched playground for architects in the Arizona desert known as Arcosanti, a place where the medium of silt, clay and concrete are the primary means of expression. Playing in the dirt, he seemed to find his medium of choice and let his activities range from the scale of ceramic houses as demonstrated by Nader Khalili at CalEarth in southern California to the hand held clay creations afforded and indulged upon at Paolo Soleri's ceramic studio at the edge of the Sonoran. He later found a nurturing environment for these tendencies while earning his MFA at RISD and achieved breakthroughs working with clay and earthen mixtures, leading to his current body of work. He now resides in Roanoke, Virginia, nestled within the phenomenal beauty of the Blue Ridge Mountains. >>

ILLUSTRATIVE CERAMIC WALL TILE MURALS

Chris Gryder

Artist Statement :

A subtle architectonic logic pervades my artwork: a kind of "organic tectonic."

I define this aesthetic as a construction involving a language of forms and patterns associated with the natural world. Inspired by the life sciences, including the fossilized record and the amazing worlds opened up by electron microscopy, I cultivate a vision where botanical and geological forms merge into an organic/geometric matrix.

Ultimately, the work is my humble attempt to make manifest underlying structures of the physical universe. >>

ILLUSTRATIVE CERAMIC WALL TILE MURALS

Chris Gryder

“Earth forming,” my novel process-of-making is a technique which involves carving intricate one-off molds out of an earthen mix of sand and clay. These fragile earthen “form works” last only long enough to cast my clay vessels and tiles. Over a period of a week, the sand mold dries and begins to dissolve, allowing the clay piece to be excavated and eventually fired to around 2000 degrees F. The technique is uniquely adapted to forming rich bas-relief surfaces, a sort of "dimensional drawing" technique that combines attributes of both image making and sculpture. >>

ILLUSTRATIVE CERAMIC
WALL TILE MURALS

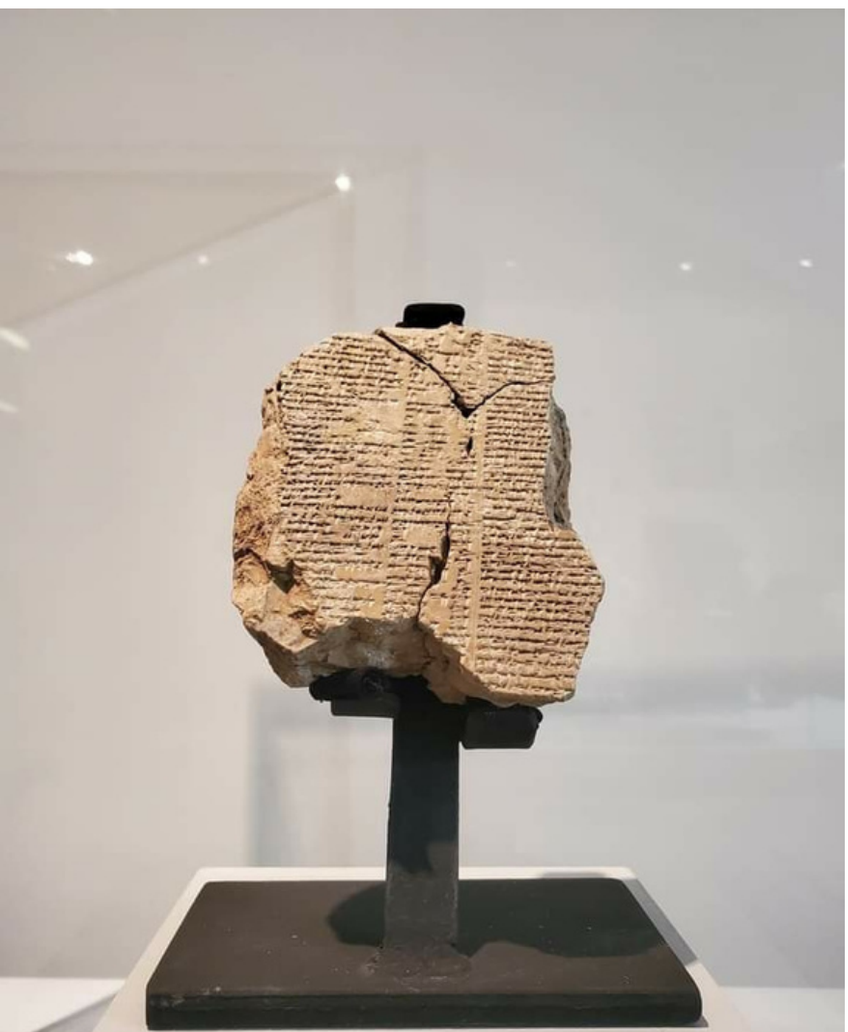
Chris Gryder

The lineage of my meticulously carved ceramic relief tiles traces back to the architectural terra cotta tradition of organically inspired facades. Suitable for both indoor and outdoor installations, the tiles come alive in strong light, creating a mesmerizing play of shadow. My skills as an artist and an architect allow me to seamlessly integrate my artistic vision with the unique needs of a specific space and thus allows me to enthusiastically explore commission projects. To this end, I have developed rendering techniques that allow me to produce studies as detailed photorealistic images that allow others to have a clear understanding of what the artwork will eventually become. <>

Amazing To Know

Crucifixion, painted in Mughal India, by Keshav Das.

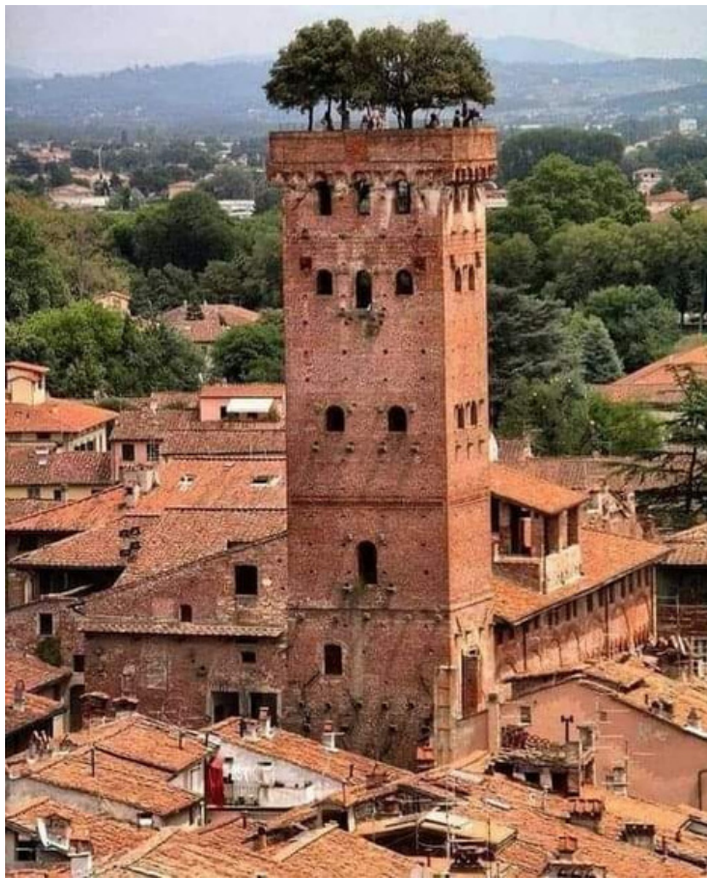
'A Christian image, in a Muslim-led empire, painted by a Hindu', writes historian and Sanskritist Prof Audrey Truschke.



Gilgamesh: The oldest piece of literature - 4000 years old.

Housed in Iraq.

Amazing To Know



The Guinigi tower is one of the few remaining towers in the center of the city of Lucca, in Tuscany. The structure was built by a family of rich and powerful merchants in the fourteenth century, 45 meters high, on the top it houses a hanging garden with seven trees

Meryt's wig is made of real human hair, about 3300 years old.

The wig found in the tomb of the couple Kha and Meryt from the 14th century BC at Deir el-Medina in Luxor is now on display at the Egyptian Museum in Turin, Italy.

The wig was discovered in a long temple-shaped wig box made of acacia wood with Meryt's name on it.

Amazing To Know

The Minaret of Jam, Afghanistan

Source: Islamic Architectural Heritage

At 206 feet, the Minaret of Jam is the second tallest ancient minaret in the world, coming behind only the Qutb Minar in Delhi. The tower is covered in elaborate designs: patterns of pentagons, hexagons, and diamonds, and a Kufic inscription in turquoise tiles.

The minaret, a feature of Islamic architecture used to provide a vantage point for the call to prayer, is located in the Ghur province of central Afghanistan, at the confluence of the Jam Rud and Hari Rud rivers.

It was built in 1194 by the Sultan Ghiyath al-Din Muhammad and is composed of four cylindrical shafts made of fired bricks. >>

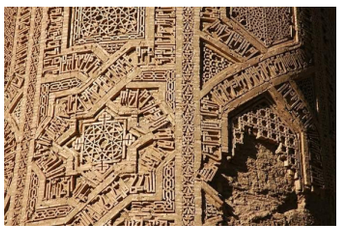
Amazing To Know

The Minaret of Jam, Afghanistan

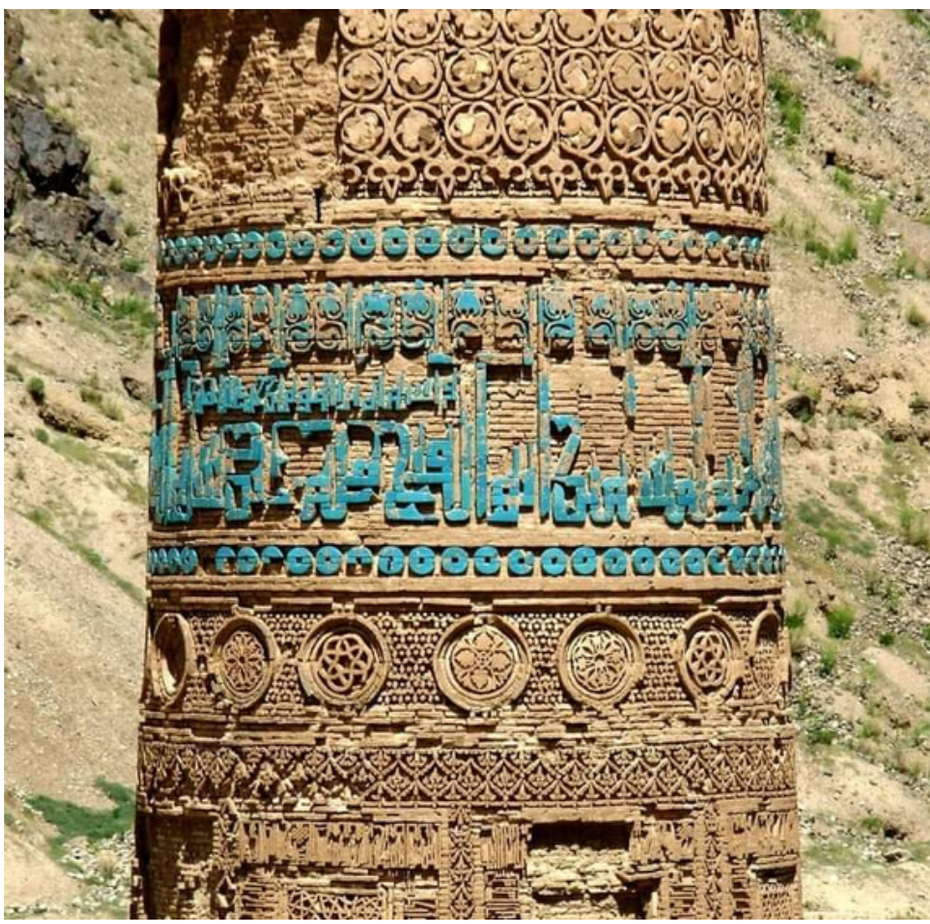
The result is an impressive structure, rearing out of an otherwise desolate valley, made all the more intriguing to archaeologists by the fact that the city that must once have surrounded it is now buried.

Though UNESCO recognized the minaret as a World Heritage site in 2002, it wasn't until several years later that archaeologists were able to visit the area and conduct studies. >>

Amazing To Know



The Minaret of Jam, Afghanistan

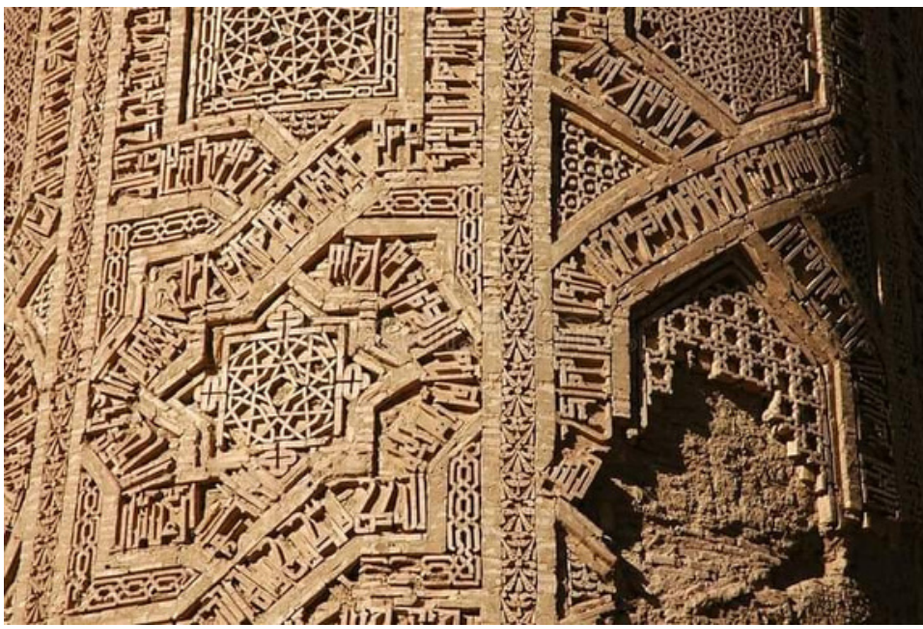


Using the robber holes dug by artifact-hunters, archaeologists recovered a small number of pottery shards, the preserved remains of about 30 different plants, and hundreds of bone fragments. Their analysis suggests that the Minaret of Jam belonged to Firuzkuh, the summer capital of the Ghurid Empire. The presence of many sheep and goat bones, marred by butchery marks—as well as a small number of horse, deer, hare, cattle, chicken, and gazelle bones—shows the citizens ate meat somewhat regularly. Equally notable is the absence of pigs, which Muslims are forbidden to eat.

Though the region is arid, and therefore not conducive to large-scale agriculture, the archaeologists also found cereal grains, like hulled barley and free-threshing wheat and grape, as well as chickpeas, lentils, apples, pears, figs, and pistachios. >>

Amazing To Know

The Minaret of Jam, Afghanistan

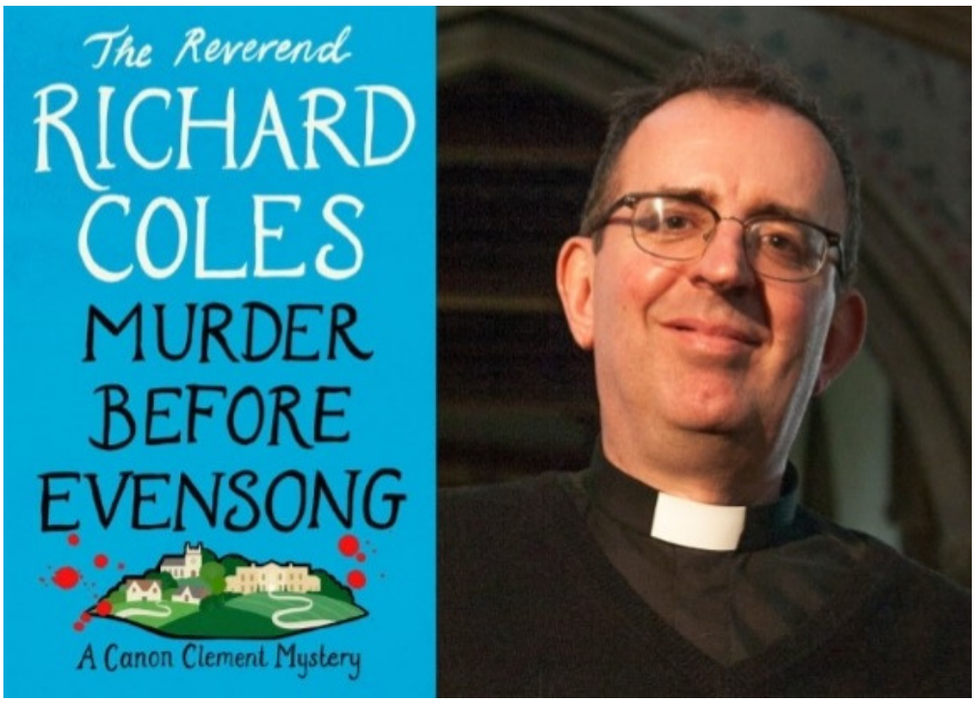


Food alone reveals little about the lives of Firuzkuh's citizens, but the remains of nearby structures provide a slightly more complete picture. In addition to a bazaar area and a hilltop fortress overlooking Jam, researchers also found Hebrew inscriptions on large stones near the minaret. The stones are thought to have been grave markers for a Jewish cemetery, suggesting Muslims and Jewish people lived together at least somewhat peacefully. But the peace was short-lived, and the Ghurid Empire fell shortly after rising to power.

From the plains of Mongolia came the Mongols, led by Ghengis Khan, who destroyed everything in their path.

Some scholars hypothesize that the Minaret of Jam was spared, perhaps due to its value as a watchtower. Whatever the reason for its reprieve, it seems clear that the residents of Firuzkuh were killed or forced to abandon their city. What's still unknown is whether this exile occurred gradually or in a sudden period of catastrophe.

For hundreds of years, Jam remained hidden and forgotten until it was rediscovered by members of the Afghan Boundary Commission in 1886. <>



About the book: (Topping & Company, UK.)

'The Reverend Richard Coles gives us a serpent in England's pastoral Eden – and whodunit fans can give praise and rejoice' – Ian Rankin

Canon Daniel Clement is Rector of Champton. He has been there for eight years, living at the Rectory alongside his widowed mother – opinionated, fearless, ever-so-slightly annoying Audrey – and his two dachshunds, Cosmo and Hilda. When Daniel announces a plan to install a lavatory in church, the parish is suddenly (and unexpectedly) divided: as lines are drawn, long-buried secrets come dangerously close to destroying the apparent calm of the village. And then Anthony Bowness – cousin to Bernard de Floures, patron of Champton – is found dead at the back of the church, stabbed in the neck with a pair of secateurs.

As the police moves in and the bodies start piling up, Daniel is the only one who can try and keep his fractured community together… and catch a killer.

The Luxury Boulevardier

Prakhar Agarwal, Mixologist, Sette Mara, The St. Regis Mumbai

Ingredients:

- 20 ml Jameson Caskmates or a whisky of your choice
- 20 ml Campari
- 20 ml Martini Rosso

Method:

- Add all the ingredients together in a mixing jar and stir it.
- Double strain the beverage into an old fashioned glass with a block of ice in it.
- Garnish the cocktail with an orange twist and smoke the cocktail with cherry wood chips.

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